

JOURNEY

there is this fellow in The Netherlands who keeps sending me photos of Céline and marvelous boxes of cigars.

well, I am a dog: I enjoy both.

the cigars go well with my red wine and I never tire of Céline or his photos — a very good face on that fellow Louis Ferdinand Destouches.

we have some famous modern writers whose faces look like the insides of bedpans and they write the same way.

I like to play: some nights I have nights of Céline photos, classical music, cigars, red wine and the typewriter.

Céline looks at me as I drink, type, listen to the music and smoke the cigars; we have a great time together as other people are bowling, sleeping, watching tv, arguing, screwing, eating, doing all those dumb things and others.

but now here

the words fly like crazy sparrows in a storm, Shostakovich bellows, as the cigar smoke whirls to the left and outside the door and into the night as the red wine, the blood of the gods enters me.

hello Céline ... Céline ... you dog ... we piss the pain of centuries ... but we can laugh ... sometimes ... how fast the bottle empties ... among your photos ... the dark luck is good.

THE ROACHES

the great editor and his wife were testing me, they didn't want to publish anything but the real thing and they wanted to find out if I was the real thing and so there I was down in New Orleans living in a room around the corner and I came over for dinner each night and afterwards we drank, although I did most of the drinking.

we ate at this table and there was a light in the wall and a wire led down from the light and it ran right past the edge of the table and when the light was turned on and we sat down to eat then two lines of roaches would

appear, one line going up the wire and the other down and sometimes they bumped and one or two roaches would fall to the table but they just leaped up onto the wire again.

I noticed this the first night I ate there but I didn't say anything because I knew that they knew I had lived in many cheap rooms full of roaches and I was supposed to be used to them but actually it made me a bit sick to look at them and I always killed them right off but down there in New Orleans I didn't say or do anything, I pretended that the roaches were fine, just there, and so what, and all that. I wanted them to print my book, they did fine work.

they never said anything about the roaches either except finally after about a week the editor said to me, "have you noticed the roaches?"

"the roaches," I answered, "oh, yeah, yeah, the roaches."

"you know," the editor said, "this other writer came by one time to eat dinner here and he saw the roaches and said, 'why in the hell don't you get rid of those damned things?'" "he did?" I asked.

"yeah, he did," said the editor's wife.

the editor smiled, "I told my wife that you would never say anything about the roaches."

"yeah, he did," said the editor's wife.

I let out a small belch. "forget about the roaches, you got anything to drink around here?"

that's what they wanted to hear.
they had a real writer in the room with them.

the editor's wife got up to fetch the first bottle of wine for that night.

A LADY WITH SOME FRENCH WINE

I picked up the phone, answered as her voice rushed on like a quicksilver snake.

I couldn't get most of it, she just kept talking, on-rushing: "... and she claims she knows you. she's dying in a hospital and she wants you to come see her. she says her name is -----."